

**Q3 Supplemental Answers Question 11a**  
**Nebraska Broadband Planning**  
**Quarterly Report – July 2010-September 2010**

- 1. If the project received funding for broadband planning, please describe progress made against all goals, objectives, and milestones detailed in the approved project plan. Be sure to include a description of each major activity/milestone that you plan to complete and your current status. (Answer below.)**

This is the third Nebraska Broadband planning quarterly report since the Nebraska Public Service Commission was notified by NTIA in January that their mapping and planning grant was approved effective January 1. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council (NITC), University of Nebraska - Lincoln (UNL), and Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) are cooperatively leading the effort to address the broadband planning needs of Nebraska's communities. UNL is the fiscal agent for the planning part of the grant.

A number of activities were identified in the planning grant to identify barriers to the adoption of broadband and IT services, creating and facilitating local technology planning teams, and collaborating with broadband service providers to encourage broadband deployment and use. These activities will be used in this report to update the broadband grant status.

***Administrative***

The broadband planning oversight team meets on a bi-monthly basis. The initial meetings, beginning in September 2009, focused on the development of the household survey questions which allowed for the survey to be distributed in February 2010. The report findings were released in June 2010. Members of the planning oversight team continue to participate in the NTIA informational webinars, present findings at meetings regarding the planning process and communicate regularly with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on the project.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2010 Status Update:* The planning grant is on schedule and the proposed budget and activities are being followed. There are funds in the grant to hire a project manager/coordinator to assist the planning team in creating a statewide plan. *During the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2010, an individual will be hired to assist planning team in these efforts. The position was again put on hold in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter as we developed the supplemental grant and job description will be revised to address the entire grant.*

**Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: A Household Survey**

Nebraskans were surveyed about their computer and Internet usage, challenges and desires for the future through a mail survey conducted in February and March 2010 by UNL. The survey mailed to 6,600 Nebraskans in February 2010 utilized the Dillman Total Design Method to achieve a 47% response rate. The household names were obtained from a marketing firm. The survey included four separate mailings to the households using the State of Nebraska Public Service Commission letterhead.

The first report on Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska was released in June 2010. The report is attached. The report includes regional, education, income, age, gender, racial and ethnic group comparisons. Key findings identified include the following example:

*Approximately four out of every five households (81%) in Nebraska has internet service. However, older persons, persons with lower household incomes, persons with lower education levels, households without children, and households in the*

*nonmetropolitan areas of the state are the groups less likely to have Internet service in their home.*

The development of the questionnaire began in October 2009 and was finalized shortly after the broadband grant was awarded in January. Questions from the Pew Foundation and other national telecommunication surveys were used in order to compare results. A copy of the survey is attached.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2010 Status Update:* The initial household survey is completed as well as an initial analysis. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, presentations were given at regional groups across Nebraska and with various other groups. In addition, a webinar was held. The purpose of the initial presentations was to build awareness and interest into the process.

### **Business Survey**

Businesses will be surveyed through DED's Business Retention and Expansion program to identify the strengths and challenges they face in utilizing technology. Currently over 400 key businesses are surveyed annually by the Department of Economic Development Statewide. To develop the statewide plan, over 1000 businesses will be surveyed as communities and regions have the capability to gather information from all types of businesses including retail, health care and services. The BR&E survey asks over 10 specific questions related to technology and broadband utilization. Additional questions will be developed that relate specifically to future opportunities. The data will be pulled together and themes will be developed.

*Status:* DED is actively engaged in gathering data. In addition, 16 communities have agreed to participate in the process and are gathering data. It is anticipated that a report will be released during the first quarter 2011.

### **Focus Groups**

Seven to 10 focus groups will be held with anchor institutions and utility providers as well as populations with low usage rates to gain understanding into the barriers from their perspective. Focus groups will also be held with businesses including farmers and ranchers.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Status Update:* The focus groups will be conducted by UNL after the analysis of the technology survey and initial results of business survey. During the fourth quarter we will begin identifying the questions that need to be asked to various groups with a goal of holding the first focus groups in December.

### **Regional Planning Teams**

Regional planning teams will be formed to conduct regional assessments, prioritize opportunities, and develop strategies. Regional coaches will assist planning teams in conducting the development of plans.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Status Update:* Planning team members have shared information about the broadband planning opportunities with all of the regional groups. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, internet connectivity and use in Nebraska survey results were presented at each of the regional groups. Regional coaches will be identified during the 4th quarter working in conjunction with each group to best meet objectives of the region and grant.

### **Regional Forums**

Regional forums will be conducted to present broadband mapping and mail survey results, to solicit feedback, and to kick off regional planning efforts. Project partners will work with regional planning

teams to host forums to present broadband mapping data and mail survey results, to solicit feedback, and to kick off regional planning efforts.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Status Update:* The regional forum component will be held in Spring 2011. Dates are being set for these meetings during 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2010. Originally, we planned to hold forums in 2010; however, this date was adjusted to include the mapping data which will be officially released in early 2011.

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